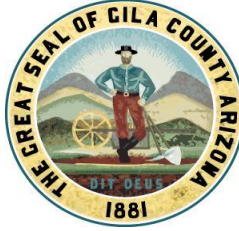


**Tommie C. Martin, District I**  
610 E. Hwy 260, Payson, 85547  
(928) 474-2029  
[tmartin@gilacountyaz.gov](mailto:tmartin@gilacountyaz.gov)

**Michael A. Pastor, District II**  
(928) 402-8753  
[mpastor@gilacountyaz.gov](mailto:mpastor@gilacountyaz.gov)

**Shirley L. Dawson, District III**  
(928) 402-8511  
[sdawson@gilacountyaz.gov](mailto:sdawson@gilacountyaz.gov)



**GILA COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**  
1400 E. Ash Street  
Globe, Arizona 85501

**Don E. McDaniel, Jr.,**  
**County Manager**  
(928) 402-4257  
[dmcDaniel@gilacountyaz.gov](mailto:dmcDaniel@gilacountyaz.gov)

**John F. Nelson,**  
**Deputy County Manager/**  
**Clerk of the Board of Supervisors**  
(928) 402-8754  
[jnelson@gilacountyaz.gov](mailto:jnelson@gilacountyaz.gov)

## Wildland Fires and Defensible Spaces

*For Immediate Release: June 8, 2011*

**CONTACT:** Gila County Board of Supervisors (928) 402-8770

(Globe, June 8, 2011)— With the current Arizona wildfires and the recent local brush fires that damaged homes, we at Gila County would like to remind everyone to be aware of their personal fire danger and provide some suggestions for creating a defensible space around homes. County employees work to keep areas that are county right-of-ways clear of weeds and understory brush; but high winds, thick stands of trees, private property, creeks and washes can and do create fire hazards. A total of eleven communities in Gila County have partnered with their local fire departments or districts to become nationally recognized Firewise Communities ®.

### **What You Can Do:**

Being Firewise begins with you. When adequately prepared, a house can withstand a wildland fire without the intervention of the fire service. In fact, a house and its surrounding community can be both firewise and compatible with the area's ecosystem. Your first defense against wildfire is to create and maintain a defensible space around your home. This does not mean that your landscape must be barren. Defensible space is an area around a structure where fuels and vegetation are treated, cleared or reduced to slow the spread of wildfire toward the structures.

- Clean gutters and roofs of tree litter, leaves, pods, and branches.
- Stack firewood away from your house

- Thin out continuous tree and shrub cover around structures and remove unhealthy vegetation
- Thin trees to achieve a 10 – 12 foot crown spacing
- Mow grasses and weeds for a distance of 30 feet from structures
- Dispose of all slash and debris left from thinning

There is an abundance of additional information available through the Cooperative Extension Office, University of Arizona. One of their many informative publications is available at: <http://www.ag.arizona.edu/pubs/natresources/az1290/>

If a resident is concerned about a potential fire hazard, their first point of contact should be their local fire department. The fire department will most likely investigate the report to make a determination on appropriate measures for mitigation.

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